

Kīlauea Eruption Recovery



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Newsletter



Matt Purvis of Grassroots Church and project consultant Koaionamamo Makuakane-Lundin stand on the site of the Kuleana Project in Pāhoa.

Growing Community

Grassroots Church receives Kīlauea Recovery Grant for nonprofit farm

A 13 acre-lot in Pāhoa is mostly overgrown with invasive species. But Matt Purvis sees it brimming with potential.

For the past month, land clearing and mulching have been

under way on the site located across Highway 130 from Hawai'i Academy of Arts and Science to turn what Purvis calls the area's largest albizia forest into a

nonprofit farm that includes plans for one or two greenhouses, a washing and packaging facility, livestock, orchards,

plots for community gardens, and more.

It's all part of the

"Kuleana Project" spearheaded by the Grassroots Church, where Purvis is a pastor, and funded with the help of

"We feel that these are the people we were called to serve."

- Matt Purvis, Grassroots Church

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Housing Survey Launched

Hawai'i County is surveying residents affected by the 2018 Kīlauea eruption about their housing impacts and needs to help guide recovery investments and projects, including an upcoming Voluntary Housing Buyout Program.

By completing the Kīlauea Recovery Housing Survey, residents will help the County better understand the choices that households are weighing regarding their own recovery, establish strategies to serve residents with the Buyout Program, inform additional housing pro-

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Grant Approval Clears Council

The Hawai'i County Council passed two measures March 3 authorizing the County to receive \$83.84 million in U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds.

HUD allocated the grant in January 2020 to address unmet housing recovery needs from the 2018 Kīlauea eruption. The unanimous votes on a resolution and accompanying bill allow the County to enter into a grant agreement with HUD and appropriate the funds. On March 2, the County Housing Agency also voted in

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SURVEY From front page

grams, and direct other recovery efforts, such as restoration of infrastructure. The Buyout application process is anticipated to start around April 30.

"We expect that the Buyout Program will go a long way to help residents find stable housing and recover economically as we regularly hear from people who were displaced and are looking for this kind of assistance," said Douglas Le, the County's disaster recovery officer. "We also understand that impacts and needs vary across households and this survey will help the County ensure it spends recovery funding effectively."

The four-month-long Kilauea eruption destroyed 612 homes, including 294 primary residences.

The Buyout Program will prioritize impacted properties that served as primary residences and applicants who are low- to moderate-income. It is funded by a \$83.84 million Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-

DR) allocation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

[www.surveymonkey.com/
r/KILAUEASURVEY](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KILAUEASURVEY)
Deadline: March 26

In January, HUD allocated an additional \$23.72 million CDBG-DR grant to the County. Programs that will be supported by those funds will be outlined in an amendment to the County's CDBG-DR Action Plan, which currently identifies the Buyout Program and a Housing Relocation Services Program as grant-funded projects, following a public comment period. Both grants must be spent on addressing unmet housing recovery needs.

"The Buyout Program is one tool to help eruption impacted residents move forward with their housing and along

their recovery journey," said County Councilmember Ashley Kierkiewicz, who represents District 4 in Puna. "It is critical that residents complete the survey as responses will help inform how we leverage and invest the additional \$23.72 million in CDBG-DR funds to build a stronger, more resilient Puna."

"Given the effects of the 2018 eruption and the Covid Pandemic, our community is in flux," said County Councilmember Matt Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder, who represents District 5 in Puna. "Like our landscape, it's clear that, besides rebuilding basic infrastructure, our priorities in Puna will constantly shift. My hope is this survey will grasp what Puna needs as we rebuild foundations that will change our home forever."

The survey can be accessed via recovery.hawaiicounty.gov or www.surveymonkey.com/r/KILAUEASURVEY. Print copies were mailed to owners of 1,275 impacted properties. The deadline is March 26.

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favor of authorizing the County to enter into the grant agreement.

The grant will fund a Voluntary Housing Buyout Program and Housing Relocation Services Program as identified in the County's CDBG-DR Action Plan that HUD approved in October 2020 following a public comment period. The application process is anticipated to begin around April 30.

"These programs will help Puna residents displaced by the eruption secure stable housing and recover financially," said Mayor Mitch Roth. "In addition to these programs, the County will continue to apply recovery dollars to support initiatives that help the community recover and become more resilient."

Said Douglas Le, the County's Kilauea disaster recovery officer: "We appreciate the Council and Housing Agency helping



Lava inundates Leilani Estates near Luana Street in 2018.

us clear this step and being an important partner in this recovery effort. By granting these authorizations, the County is ready to complete the grant agreement and begin funding housing assistance programs to help with Puna's recovery."

County Councilmember Ashley Kierkiewicz said that many Puna residents are still struggling to resolve their

housing situation after it was upended after the eruption.

"Roll out of these programs will help those who need assistance and provide the County with the information it needs to work with community to identify how best to position the additional CDBG-DR allocation in a way that supports high impact, long-lasting revitalization," she said.

GRASSROOTS From front page

\$275,000 from Hawai'i County's Kīlauea Recovery Grant Program. He said the farm will be about growing community as well as food, with part of its mission focused on providing jobs and training for those in need. With the future development of showers and laundry on site, it also will help serve the broader community during future eruptions and other disasters. Those ideas are summed up in the project's three main goals: job creation, sustainable agriculture, and community connections.

"We feel that these are the people we were called to serve," said Purvis, after noting the church, which previously rented space at Akebono Theater, remained in Pāhoa after the historical building was destroyed by fire. "Because of our relationships and history, I think we will be successful, and hopefully even more than we realize."

The property is owned by Missionary Church, a parent organization to Grassroots.

Purvis credits the Kīlauea recovery grant for getting this project off the ground.

"We would have never done it," he said. "Not the same, at least."

In a sense, the Kuleana Project is a much expanded version of the community garden the church started next to his business, the Tin Shack Bakery.

Purvis said the church has been paying people in need \$15 an hour to work on the garden, and received an influx of donations during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic to cover wages. He said that support gives him confidence the more ambitious Kuleana Project will succeed.

"It goes to show the community wants to help and they value work," Purvis said. Employing those affected by the eruption and others in need will be a

Kīlauea Recovery Grant Awards

Grants are distributed through nonprofit organizations to serve disaster relief, recovery, mitigation or remediation assistance for physical damages or losses.

- Big Island Resource Conservation and Development Council – \$500,000 to support infrastructure development for displaced orchid growers.
- Habitat for Humanity – \$500,000 to build five affordable homes for families who lost their homes during the eruption.
- Hooulu-Lahui – \$500,000 to assist Kua O Ka Lā Public Charter School with bringing its leased property into code compliance.
- Malama O Puna – \$375,000 for road repairs in Leilani Estates.
- Food Security Hawaii – \$350,000 to assist farm damaged by the eruption.
- Fellowship for Perpetual Growth – \$280,000 to assist farming cooperative damaged by the eruption.
- Grassroots Church – \$275,000 to support job creation, sustainable agriculture and community engagement for the Kuleana Project in Pāhoa.
- Hawaii Rise Foundation – \$250,000 for Kapoho Vacationland project planning.
- Pahoa Lava Museum – \$175,124 to restore road access to 16 properties isolated by lava in Malama Homesteads.
- O Maku'u Ke Kahua Community Center – \$154,000 to assist Hawaiian families move from subsistence to commercial farming, strengthen farmer's market, and address safety and security issues.
- Ono Seeds – \$120,000 to assist a farm damaged by the eruption.
- Self Discovery through Art – \$40,750 to support a recovery, resilience, recreation facilitator training program.
- Yeshua Outreach Center – \$25,000 to build capacity as a viable Red Cross shelter.
- Pahoa Lava Museum – \$23,584 to open Puamana Road.
- Pahoa Lava Museum – \$22,000 to restore road access to Kapoho Crater.
- Polestar Gardens – \$7,500 to restore greenhouse, water and irrigation systems for a farm.
- Church of the Holy Apostles – \$5,000 to repair earthquake damage.

focus of the Kuleana Project. He sees it acting as a bridge to other employment opportunities.

"If there is a disconnect, maybe we can make that connection," Purvis said, referring to people out of work and those in need of employees.

He anticipates three to five people will be employed at a greenhouse, with perhaps 40 people doing some sort of work, including temporary or volunteer assistance, throughout a year.

The property also could host a market and food trucks to give entrepreneurs a chance to succeed. He relates that to how he first started his business by selling at farmers markets.

"I think it's been in our DNA as a church for a long time to provide a space for agriculture, and God willing, agrotourism, disaster recovery and other ways to serve the community," Purvis said.

Highway 137 Restoration Planned

Hawai'i County will restore all sections of Highway 137 inundated by lava during the 2018 Kīlauea eruption.

Public Works Director Ikaika Rodenhurst made the announcement on Feb. 16 to the County Council's Committee on Governmental Operations, Relations, and Economic Development. He also provided tentative timelines for road projects that he cautioned are aggressive and subject to change.

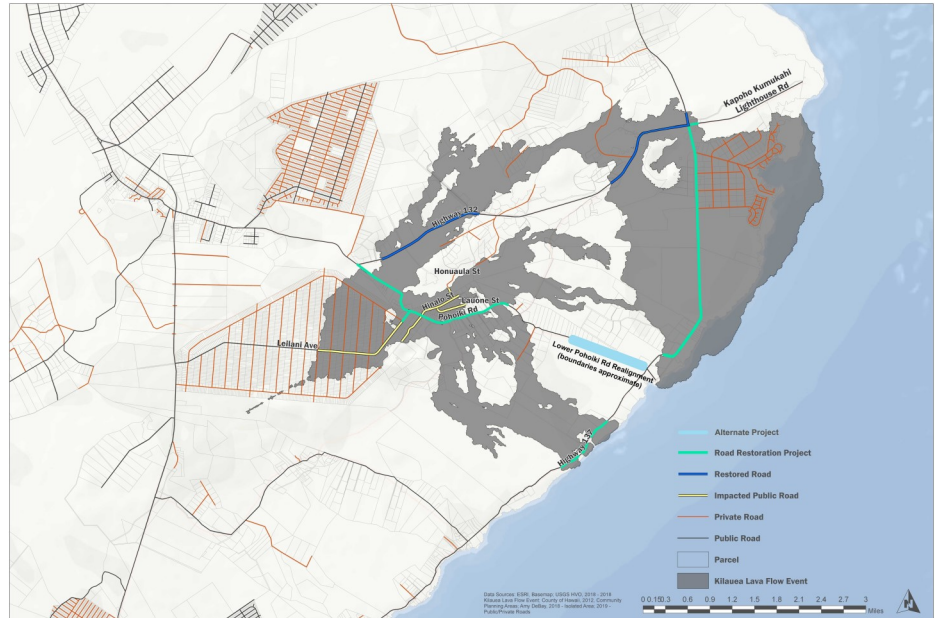
For Highway 137, Rodenhurst estimated the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) could provide a notice to proceed by the end of the year, with construction starting in March 2022. Restoration of Lighthouse Road would occur at the same time, assuming measures are in place for protection of iwi kūpuna at Kumukahi.

Pohoiki Road reconstruction would start sooner, with FEMA's notice to proceed estimated to occur in June 2021 and construction starting in September 2021. Restoration of about 850 feet of Leilani Avenue from Pohoiki Road to Kahukai Street is included in that timeline.

The County previously planned to restore about a mile of Highway 137 in Kapoho to provide access to adjacent residential and farm lots and to make a temporary road over another segment of the coastal route permanent. This latest decision extends the commitment for restoration to all sections of the road inundated in 2018.

In total, the eruption inundated about 13 miles of public roads.

In 2019, the County restored Highway 132 with funding from the Federal Highway Administration. That followed completion of a temporary access road on Highway 137 between Pohoiki and Mac-



More than 13 miles of public roads were inundated during the 2018 eruption.

Kenzie State Recreation Area in 2018.

A cost agreement between the County and FEMA that was announced in March 2020 identified about \$82 million worth of damage to public roads from the eruption, not including Highway 132. The Federal share of that is about \$61.5 million, or 75%. The County's 25% local match is about \$20.5 million.

FEMA's funds are provided on a

reimbursement basis. Funds not spent on restoring roads can be allocated to alternate public infrastructure projects to support recovery in Puna.

An alternate project that has been identified is realigning the narrow lower portion of Pohoiki Road that wasn't inundated to provide safe two-way access, while preserving the historic mango trees along that route. That project is anticipated to begin in October 2022.

Right-of-Entry Agreements

Property Owners

Have you signed a right-of-entry agreement with the County for road restoration projects?

Contact Public Works

(808) 961-8327

Tentative Road Restoration Schedule

- ⇒ Pohoiki Road: September 2021 anticipated start date
- ⇒ Highway 137: March 2022 anticipated start date
- ⇒ Lighthouse Road: March 2022 anticipated start date (along with protective measures for burials at Kumukahi)
- ⇒ Lower Pohoiki Road realignment: October 2022 anticipated start date

Pohoiki Boat Ramp Options Presented



A swimmer dips his toes into the water at the Pohoiki Boat Ramp.

Three options for restoring the Pohoiki Boat Ramp, blocked since the 2018 Kīlauea eruption by a new black sand beach, were presented to the Hawai‘i Board of Land and Natural Resources on Feb. 26. No action was taken during this informational briefing.

According to the Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources, the simplest and least permanent option would be excavating and dredging a channel for

the existing boat ramp. That would involve removing about 15,000 cubic yards of sand with an estimated timeline of nine months and cost of \$2.5 million.

Adding entrance channel improvements to that and a new swim area would cost about \$6 million and take 2-3 years to complete.

The third option — construction of a new boat ramp facility on the north side of the bay — would involve a new break-

water, boat ramp, loading dock, and trailer turn around and parking area. That would take 5-6 years and cost \$28 million.

Each option has varying levels of regulatory environmental review and depends on funding, according to DLNR. The agency said it plans to pursue funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which can cover 75% of eligible costs.

Fissure 8 Named

The Hawai‘i Board on Geographic Names announced March 4 that Fissure 8 will officially be known as Ahu‘ailā‘au.

The name, among several nominations from Puna residents, refers to the altar of ‘Ailā‘au, a volcano deity. Proposals were accepted through June 30, 2019.

“We are excited to have a name that provides a sense of place, history, and cultural identity to the fissure that took

with it so many memories,” said Mayor Mitch Roth.

“To understand the power of mother nature is to understand the stories and context in which our ancestors have explained it. Ahu‘ailā‘au is an embodiment of how Hawaiians have explained the natural phenomenon for generations, and it is integral to our understanding of this place.”

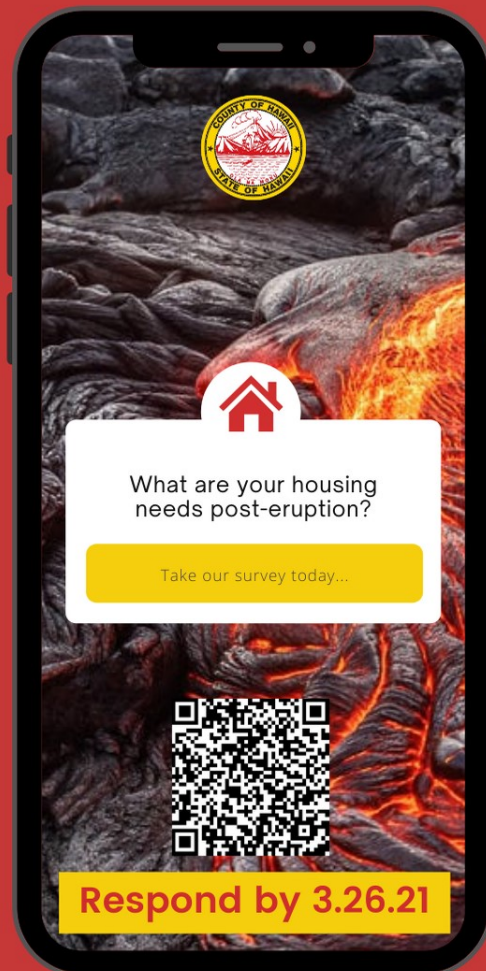


Lava erupts from Ahu‘ailā‘au, formerly known as Fissure 8, in Leilani Estates.



Kīlauea Recovery Housing Survey

Now Available



recovery.hawaiicounty.gov